

Researchers, students and interns from third countries – The Council approves a compromise on new rules to make the European Union more accessible

On 26 November 2015, on behalf of the Council of the European Union, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper) approved a compromise agreed in trialogue with the European Parliament on a directive which aims to offer a coherent legal framework for third country citizens wishing to enter Europe legally for the purposes of research, study, internships, volunteering, student exchanges and au-pair work.

The directive aims to encourage social, cultural and economic relations between the European Union and third countries, develop transfers of skills and know-how and promote competitiveness.

The situation of researchers and students has been greatly improved. Not only are they able to benefit from flexible and simplified intra-EU mobility, they can also stay in the EU at least nine months after finishing their studies or research in order to look for a job or set up a business. In parallel to their studies, students will be able to work at least 15 hours a week. The directive also provides for uniform conditions for entering and staying in Europe for interns and volunteers under the European Volunteer Scheme. Finally, the text lays out clearer provisions for improving entry and residence conditions for students and au pairs.

Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg Minister for Immigration and Asylum and President in-office of the JHA Council, expressed his satisfaction with the agreement reached by the Luxembourg Presidency: "I am particularly pleased with this agreement which will offer more legal entry routes into the EU Member States. I am convinced about the added value of this new tool and the beneficial effects it will have. The directive will help to make the European Union more accessible and will attract more young talent to Europe, which will help us to invest in the future".

The agreement at Coreper on 26 November was reached during three-way negotiations between the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the European Commission on 17 November 2015.

After approval of the agreement on the compromise by the European Parliament's LIBE Commission, scheduled on 30 November, the legal texts will be submitted to the "Justice and Home Affairs" Council on 4 December 2015 for political agreement.